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Princess Nourah Bint Abudulrhman University challenge : transition from a local to a global institution / Sana Almansour ; Ken Kempner

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Abstract

This case study addresses the transition of a university from a local to a global institution in the unique cultural and economic circumstances of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. Specifically, the authors investigate the case of Princess Nourah Bint Abudulrhman University (PNU), the largest women's university in the world with over 39,000 students. Saudi Arabia, and PNU in particular, offers a unique case of higher education development where economic and cultural issues pose both extraordinary opportunities and complications compared to other developed and newly industrialized countries. Although this case is of women's higher education in Saudi Arabia, the study offers a broader application into understanding the developing role of women in other Muslim countries and their participation in the public sphere of a Kingdom guided by Sharia Law. This study of PNU provides a case example for other national universities struggling to maintain a cultural, social, and economic balance between local needs and global influences. The administrators and faculty interviewed for this study indicate PNU's future as a global institution depends on its ability to

05.1.2026

maintain a delicate balance among the educational, economic, social, and cultural needs of women in the face of changing cultural mores. Herein lies the promise PNU offers other women's universities in the Arab World in their transition from a local to a global institution. The critical message from this study for other universities in transition in both developed and developing countries is the need to preserve cultural identity in the face of globalization. (HRK / Abstract übernommen) Almansour, Sana, E.Mail: saalmansour@pnu.edu.sa